



Friday, April 24, 2015

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for considering the common sense, grass roots issues that I am presenting to you. I begin by saying that I believe in the United States government's ability to become once again, an institution trusted by its constituency. I say this not to be negative, but truthful. Integrity is what makes this nation great, and it is what I expect from all of my leaders. I thank you for demonstrating integrity to myself and my children. Approval ratings for government are at all-time lows, because the American people are struggling. I hear almost every politician from both sides of the aisle saying during every election cycle that "Mom and Pop" small businesses are the backbone of the nation. You say that you want small business to remain competitive, and a large part of the economic recovery that we all long for. I happen to work for a very small business, which labors under seemingly unreasonable government restrictions. These unjust rules decrease my ability to compete with my corporate competitors. I am speaking of locally owned and operated LPFM radio. Now, I understand why board members must live close to the transmitter site. That restriction keeps large corporations from procuring LPFM licenses, and operating them remotely from unreasonable distances from the community that the LPFM station is to serve. It does help those like me, that want the local "community" feel of the media returned to the airwaves. The restrictions, however, that cripple us do not serve our station's best interests, or the "Mom and Pop" businesses that underwrite our station. The restrictions that I speak of are those that keep us from making calls to action to our listenership, and that do not allow us to speak of the quality of our underwriters' goods and services. These restrictions serve only to give our competitors at the large corporate stations an unfair advantage over us in the market place. It gives them the opportunity to blow the whistle to the FCC, and attack a small competitor, much like a wolf pack taking down a limping lamb. We serve the community in a way that corporate radio cannot. With our low overhead and expenses, we can actually put your mother's back porch bakery on the air at a rate she can afford. Corporate radio charges much too much for small businesses to get to the airwaves competitively. However, many potential underwriters turn us away because we are bound by FCC fetters that will not allow us to produce quality commercials for them. We have played all of the word games and look for creative ways to stay in compliance with the FCC regulations, and still please those that want to be heard on our station. Now we go back to listen to you on the campaign trail. From both sides of the aisle you say passionately that you believe in small business and want small business to prosper. We have heard you say it, and I believe you are people of integrity and common sense. That is why the American people elected you. It seems to me that you should have no issue coming together in agreement with one another to lift the noncommercial restrictions from LPFM radio stations that serve small and rural communities. Many also serve larger cities with small businesses wishing to be known among their corporate competitors. Those of us that work for LPFM stations operate on tight budgets, and struggle to feed our families, simply for the love of bringing small business an opportunity to compete, and to keep our community entertained and well informed.



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We cannot contribute large amounts to campaigns or pay lobbyists as our corporate competitors can. All we can do is compel you to operate in fairness, and move swiftly to remove our economic shackles that serve only the well-funded and established corporate radio giants. I would love to tell my listeners, as well as my underwriters that our representatives in government, regardless of party affiliation, opened the floodgate of fairness for local LPFM stations. Low power, does not mean low influence. Our listeners and underwriters are loyal, and they trust us because we operate in integrity. I am all for free markets, as long as they are fair markets. We are well aware that big radio corporations have more power, more reach, and more resources with which to try to sway your attention away from this pressing matter, and we accept that. All we are asking for is the chance to give our "Mom and Pop" underwriters the same opportunity to ask our listeners to visit their establishments that the businesses advertising on corporate radio have. Level the playing field for us, and watch the grass roots, small business economic revivals begin. This letter is being brought to you by Dave Solomon of the LPFM Advocacy Group, of which I am a proud member and supporter. He will call your attention to the specific restrictions that keep us from being able to compete with the giants. How many more LPFM Stations must turn in their licenses, or labor under FCC fines for simply trying to compete with corporate radio? We thank you for hearing us, your constituents.

Sincerely,

Douglas D. Kirkham

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Chief Marketing Officer

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